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Conference Abstract

ecoEd: Cohesive training and skill development for digital ecoscience tools

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Abstract

Digital research infrastructures such as data portals and virtual laboratories enable easier access to data and analytical tools. Such infrastructures are essential to deliver research excellence that drives innovation, but we also need to ensure that we have a skilled workforce that can use these infrastructures. Therefore, training and skill development of students, researchers, government practitioners and industry professionals is key to the long-term success of this investment. In Australia, a suite of digital infrastructures has been developed for environmental sciences to enhance our understanding of the natural world and making forward projections into novel conditions (e.g. Atlas of Living Australia, Biodiversity and Climate Change Virtual Laboratory, *ecocloud*, Terrestrial Ecosystem Research Network). To provide users with a holistic approach to environmental spatial data discovery and analysis, these infrastructures have joined forces to deliver an exciting and innovative new training program. This program, called *ecoEd*, provides cohesive training and skill development to university lecturers, researchers and industry professionals enabling them to combine theoretical concepts with real-world applications.

In this presentation, I will present how *ecoEd* was developed and the outcomes of the training sessions in which a group of *ecoEd* Champions absorbed ready-to-use lecture and workshop modules along with tools and knowledge on how to use the platforms. These resources can immediately be used in undergraduate courses that focus on topics such as ecology, biogeography, conservation biology, environmental management and spatial analysis as well as in stand alone workshops for researchers and practitioners. The

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training program aims to provide the Champions with the resources and knowledge required so that they can confidently re-deliver the lectures and workshops in their own institutions. As such, *ecoEd* is increasing the capacity of Australia's environmental science community to advance science and deliver outcomes that underpin the sustainable use of our ecosystems using the latest advances in digital technologies. Moreover, it is enabling first-rate science education in Australia by supporting and nurturing our future scientists.

Keywords

training, skill development, platforms, tools, infrastructure, biodiversity, Australia

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